



*Decadent Performance
Era @ ABC NO RIO*



Saxophonist in whiteface blows at Helen and Edgar Oliver's "Haunted Circus" evening. (Photo by Mitch Corber.)

this issue is dedicated to:

RIO



Jorge Brandon, "El Coco Que Hobia," poet, sign-painter, and eminence grise of the Lower East Side. (This photo by Bobby G

Prince Lear through the blasted outskirts of the town - a giant boy - half monster and half man with a child's hope still beating in his eyes - hes cautiously advanced toward the ancestral neighborhood.

EXCERPTED FROM PRINCE LEARS PLAYGROUNDS by EMMA OLIVER



Brainwash from above, looking south. (Photo by Andrea Collard.)

complex socio-political "diatribe" to date, includes simplified renditions of money bags, electrical transmission towers, burning oil storage tanks, all intended to evoke the fundamentals of power—its sources and manifestations in nature and society. This work is conceived as public sculpture, which by definition has always been a commemoration of power.

Brainwash extends the centuries-old tradition of civic fountains, whether in Rome, Versailles or London, embellished with emblems such as horses, dolphins, and naked children to celebrate natural and political forces. This tradition, which has gone somewhat into eclipse during our century, has guided Howland's output since 1980: that June she exhibited a modern emblematic fountain at the Times Square Show. It was in fact a monument to power politics: a four foot high simplified model of an oil rig, set in a basin from which oil was pumped upward. Installed in a men's room (and thus Duchampian in spirit), the work was blatantly ironic. The footings of the rig were bag shapes made in concrete and labelled with dollar signs. Above

The mountain is the most elaborately detailed part of Brainwash. Its side is cut away to reveal a vertebral cord of anarchist bombs like those used in silent film comedies. Painted in ochres and siennas crossed by carbonic black stripes, the mountain's side is composed from strata of buried money bag
pyrant. The staircase ends in a second pentagonal pool. Its bottom is inscribed with GE trademarks. Under the water these logos suggest a world short-circuited, and spell death as surely as a skull crossed with bones. Six submachine guns spout water-pistol jets into this idiotically military-industrial plaza pool.

TEXT FROM ABC NORIC DINERO

straightforward but less creative approach to engineering an event. In the past, since Jack & Peter had for the most part, not been dealing with the kind of artists who used representative slides of their work - imagine a slide of Philly projectile vomiting, onto her audience! - they often had to use 'creative grant proposal writing' in order to get a hundred bucks for supplies & advertising for a show, sometimes using slides taken at previous shows to represent something they wanted to do in the future. Now however, with funding belts tightening all around, they had to play straight by the book and ask that artists submit slides with their proposals. Oddly enough, NYSCA noticed the more streamlined grantwriting coming from No Rio and criticized them for becoming inflexible even though it was their own guidelines being followed in a carrot & stick fashion! So there evolved a more definite 'gallery' mentality, the downside of which, was that people were using No Rio to fluff up their image or accrue credibility by association, the upside was, that still, those coming & using the space were still the unknown, least often heard voices in the community.

Overall though, there was a period of diminished activity, exacerbated by worsening building structural problems and increasing harassment by the city HPD office. A sort of void had developed, burn out comes quick at No Rio due to the intensity of 'initial 'burning' of its idealistic participants. As always though, there are those waiting in the wings to emerge and fill this void with energy and drama. The next issue will document No Rios' late 80s incarnation as a pre-eminent spoken word venue.

Usually,

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Eric P. Dingle

ol. COOKIE MONSTER® the logo illustrates "one of the underlying feelings of the nine-day movement: pure deliberate

Moloch soars over the city. Those ruled by Moloch do not know it, but they love the stern taste of his whip, though they do not know it. It is enough to be well fed in this town.

Dionysus wakes up under a garbage can on Avenue A., he stands up in a pool of cheap grape wine puke and whistles a little tune to himself, stretching and scratching his codpiece. The day is crisp like a notebook page. He heads over to the park for a bath. An old man with a dirty white, floppy hat is standing in the grass chanting Spanglish poetry at the pigeons, when he notices Dionysus he gives a wink and calls him over. "Hello my freind, I have something for you" he says with a devilish grin, and hands Dionysus a card. It is number 0 of the Tarot, the Fool, the card of beginnings and endings and wayward journeys. On the back, written in purple magic marker, is a message:

Pyramid club - when
you wake up, darling -
I'll be waiting for
you. We need to talk.
XOXOXO KALI XOXOXO

The Extremist symbol. Pfahler writes that the logo illustrates "...one of the underlying feelings of the nine-day movement: pure deliberate

Dionysus grins and says "Thank you Coco Que Habla". As he walks away, he hears El Coco Que Habla saying behind him "If the fool would persist in his folly, he would become wise".

The Pyramid.

Darkness, interspersed with flashing light illuminating strange activities, the activities themselves illuminating why darkness was invented by the God of light, who couldn't afford a good pair of sunglasses. Music and forgetfulness swirled together out on the dance floor, sometimes dancing with, and for, each other, sometimes just dancing alone, enjoying the act of movement as an end to itself, like erotic babies. Enter a young (man?) holding a slender mask attached to a stick over (his?) eyes. (She?) flirts with (herself?) Notices the dancer on stage. (She?) is Kali, the surly dervish and Dionysus is captivated by (his?) hoola hoop which twirls around (her?) hips like a ring around Saturn.

As the music ends, Kali approaches the bar and sits next to Dionysus. "Hello pussycat, glad you could make it". (She?) offers (his?) cheek to Dionysus, who kisses it passionately. "Enough pussycat!" Kali squeals loudly. Those sitting on the stools nearest them look over, then away again. "I suppose you want to talk about our little experiment eh?" Dionysus whispers into Kalis' ear. (She?) nods her head. "Okay, well, so far as I know, Moloch hasn't found out anything yet, the old fools' still in the dark." Kali giggles. "Yes, by the time father finds out, it'll be too late, his power will be balanced by what we have created. He really underestimates us, you know, he thinks all he has to do is to seduce these mortals with

Due to space limitations, more of the shows and events which occurred during that time cannot be highlighted. While the initiative and energy, resources and improvisational drive lasted, so did the force behind the events. But the art world was changing, and so was the neighborhood. The Reagan recession set in, the AIDS/homophobic backlash was in full swing and while many of the older co-conspirers moved to other cities, died, or became involved with other projects, the newer artists coming around often displayed a markedly different approach to creativity, and this was something which the directors could only deal with as best as they could, trying to salvage something out of the old ideas while still providing a forum for newer voices. By the mid to late 80s the populist aesthetic at No Rio had begun to be undermined by an emerging awareness of artists themselves, brought about by the east village art explosion, of their 'scene' or 'hip' (ethus economic) clout, of the possibility of 'moving up' by exhibiting at underground, non-commercial spaces like No Rio. It became harder and harder to get artists involved in neighborhood projects or even into collaborative enterprises amongst themselves anymore. This time is referred to sardonically as the 'stepping stone' era, when artists would come by, show slides of their work and ask to exhibit, put it up for 2 weeks, write the event up in their resume and disappear, one after another. As well, tighter NEA & NYSCA funding requirements brought about a more practical,

Naked Eye Cinema eventually evolved into Naked Eye TV on New Yorks public access television. Says Peter: "We first started to make our own films, which we had been doing before we came to ABC in the early 80s, experimental, super 8 etc, but there was no venue for this type of film, so we created one". It was a travelling cinema which used ABC as a base, sometimes screenings took place there but more often they took place in abandoned public lots and

buildings and

parks, as well as at Embargo Books and the old Gas Station at Avenue B and 2nd, or at the Zone which was across the st. and the film would be projected onto the billboard next to the Gas Station.

Naked Eye Cinema also became involved with Marta Valle Junior High, initiating an apprentice program where each student would work with a photographer and learn basic camera techniques. Fred Kahl, who later became Coney Islands 'Human Blockhead', took them on field trips to museums and taught 35mm still photography.

money, and litter the place with watchdogs like Ronald Reagan, the NEA and MOMA and that the whole system will run by itself like a perpetual motion machine.

The foolish bastard, he doesn't reckon on our agents." "Yes, but to really

restore the balance of power between us and Moloch, we would need at least a thousand more of these little 'zones', like the one down on Rivington St." "Oh, there's more alright, they assume many forms, you can't always recognize them for what they are, many are under such deep cover that they don't themselves know what they are, but they're there, they all serve our purposes, just as any beer and peanut butter and jelly sandwich does."

"So, how are things down there, anyways, at - whats it called again? That name you came up with makes absolutely no sense to me." "ABC No Rio, just remember the first letters are like one of our other little experiments - Anarchist Black Cross, you remember them, right?" "Okay, yea, ABC, I'll try to remember." "So, uh, what year is it, 1783?" - "1983! - Kali!"

The Extremist symbol. Pfahler writes that the logo illustrates "one of the underlying feelings of the nine-day movement: pure deliberate

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"Well, you know how it is when you're immortal, Dion, it's all pretty much the same! Anyway, 1983, right, so now our experiment has passed its first tests in its development, and it's coming along just fine, they've they've got lots of spunk, I can tell you! The founding directors have moved on and there's a new crowd running things. They're not so much visually oriented, are they, with their 'Art', it looks like they're finding new ways to tell old stories."

"Yes, you know, the old stories have to be told over & over, humans never learn, the stories might have new names and new tellers and new ways of telling them, but revolt and definition, definition of self and reality, actually, a cataloguing of existence and its possibilities, always lies at the root. But yes, this crowd is much more prone to the older, pagan rituals of dancing around the fire - although they have just a wood burning stove - and enacting their pre-conscious odes to the elemental drives and forces which first lured them out of the womb. It's very different from the artists who were there before, they were interesting, yes, but the difference is that instead of putting their ideas down on a piece of paper or canvass and hanging it on a wall, these people are trying to be the ideas, be the canvass themselves upon which they tell their stories." "Yes, there is no such thing as art is there, just life, if you can find it." "If you can create it, you mean." "Of course. Interestingly enough, while they are still concerned with examining thier role in the neighborhood and establishing themselves as members of the community, they are actually moving further away from it spiritually, I think."

Jack Waters and Leslie Lowe decided to screen interesting or obscure films in unconventional settings. They called the concept Naked Eye Cinema and approached George and Mike Kuchar with the idea of a major retrospective for the first Naked Eye show. They agreed and loaned Jack and Leslie 15 or 20 of their earliest, most hilarious works. The screenings took place in several places over the course of one weekend. They mixed experimental work by other filmmakers as well including Bradley Eros and Aline Mare, Penelope Wherli and myself. These screenings introduced a large number of people to the work of the Kuchar Brothers. They did not have the notoriety or cult status that they presently enjoy. Sarah Schulman and Jim Hubbard attended one screening and approached me afterward to see if my films could be included in the first New York Gay and Lesbian Experimental Film Festival, that they were curating. I remember my quardary over whether I wanted to be identified as a filmmaker or a "gay filmmaker". I decided either way was fine.

Jack and Leslie kept Naked Eye Cinema going for several years, screening amazing films all over the city, in abandoned lots and buildings, parks, galleries, schools etc. Jack is friends with the filmmaker Michel Auder. He asked him about a film he had seen only once many years before. It had been shot in Italy and starred Taylor Mead, Viva, and an entire cast of Marhol groupies. It was called Cleopatra. Apparently Michel had been given money by some very wealthy patrons in the mid 1960's to make any film he wanted. He flew the Marholians to Italy and they made Cleopatra in an abandoned bath house. Of course it was completely debauched and the rich patrons were mortified. They demanded the negatives and all prints before they would give Michel the balance of money agreed upon. He handed them over and they burned everything. He managed to hang on to a work print, the only in existence, and he allowed Jack to screen it - the first screening in 25 years. When word got out that an obscure Marhol era film would be screening, the phone started to ring...and ring. Two days before the screening Viva called and screamed "Who gave you that film! I can't believe your showing that shit. I'll be there. Keep 10 seats for me." She did show up for the screening with a small entourage. The film is really sick - Taylor Mead in particular, drunk and pathetic as he attempts to pick up several of the humpy Italian extras.

The Acosta family lived upstairs. The three young children, Maria, Raymond and Manny, had formed earlier relationships with Bobby, Rebecca, Alan and Richard and we got to know and love them as well. Maria was a very quiet and sweet girl who had a natural ability to draw, Raymond was prematurely entering his teens and was a really nice kid but already showing signs of aggression, and little Manny was really great, full of energy and hilarious. They enjoyed coming downstairs and hanging out, but in reality, it always seemed to me that the artwork, the people who hung out in the space, and the space itself were foreign to them. Perhaps they thought it was stupid or irrelevant - and I'm sure in many ways it was.

FAX FROM CARL GEORGE

July 24, 1998

I first ventured in to No Rio in January 1983. Brad Taylor and I happened to hear that an artist run storefront existed on Rivington street and the group running the place would be meeting that night. We entered to find Richard Armijo, Bobby G., Rebecca Howland and Alan Moore (and a few other people) sitting in a decrepit, dank, poorly lit, but warm (thanks to the makeshift wood burning Franklin stove) that Alan Moore had constructed out of an old oil drum storefront space. They were discussing/arguing about something but stopped conversation soon after we entered. Bobby G. asked me why we had come to the meeting. I said that I understood the place to be open to exhibition, performance or whatever ideas. Brad, his brother Brian, Jack Waters, Peter Cramer, and I had discussed the idea of 7 Days of Creation, a 7 day, 24 hour a day happening that would be loosely based on myths and legends of creation and would incorporate any and all forms of artistic or political expression including dance, performance, video, all visual arts (painting etc.), installation, forums, panels, manifestos, children's workshops etc. There was to be virtually no curatorial effort other than to make an open call to all creative people and to suggest the theme of myths and legends of creation. The response was tremendous and the 7 days (April 1 - 7, 1983) became a happening event with constantly morphing exhibitions of artwork, films and performance at every and all hours of the day. About 400 artists took part in some way or another. Samoa and I were living together at the time in a small studio apartment of E. 6th street and it was exactly at this time that we sneaked out of our apartment in the middle of the night after having not paid rent for 5 months. We dragged our king sized futon to No Rio and threw it into the middle of the space. It became the crash site, fuck pad catch all for the duration.

After the 7 days we remained active at the space, initiating drawing classes, political forums and collaborations with the nearby elementary (Hanna Silver) and secondary schools. We worked in the classrooms with the art teachers and offered apprenticeships to students interested in learning more about any art medium. The medium that generated the most interest was film and video and 8 students attended regular classes in No Rio. We screened films regularly at the space, Potemkin from Eisenstein, Los Olvidos from Bunuel etc. - all free from the Donnell library. We worked with the students organizing a very successful talent show. Gordon Kurtti and I worked with a small group designing the stage set for the show. They decided they wanted to spray paint the New York skyline, so we got foamcore and seamless paper from Materials for the Arts and worked together to make a fantastic set. The talent show was a huge success. I still run into some of the kids and they always tell me what a great time that was - of course they're all married with kids of their own. Anyway, after the first year or so, we received all kinds of commendations from the principal, school board and local city government offices. Most importantly, we saw that real interaction with the kids was the most effective way to stimulate and encourage creativity. It was much less likely that many of the same kids would have come into No Rio, or that we would ever have met them otherwise.

"Yes, it's odd, to say the least. On the one hand, I'm sure they all consider themselves to be fighting a kind of war in which they are on the side of the oppressed, the underdogs of the world, and if the physical battleground is in that neighborhood, on Rivington street, then they certainly live in a neighborhood of underdogs, victims of racism, sexism, capitalism, you name it, and yet, the neighborhood itself probably would not agree on the same terms of the fight as these artists would, except to say that they really wish that the 'haves' would cease denying the 'have nots' from their fair share of societal clout and economic booty on the grounds of race, sex or class and would grant equal access to 'The Good Life' as defined by the industrialists, landlords and advertising agencies, they are not exactly clamouring for the downfall of things as they are but for admittance to the spectacle of things as they are.

"Take for instance the young wife with four kids, very catholic, very devout, with a husband who works 60 hours a week as a construction laborer, dreaming of owning his own construction company some day, and sometimes, well, little things, really, just get to him, like the frustration of trying to get by in his job where, because of limited english and the color of his skin, he is treated as an inferior by his co-workers and paid less by his bosses, and sometimes, when he gets home, if his dinner isn't on the table, if the kids aren't quiet, if his wife isn't looking pretty enough today or disagrees with something he says - in short - if he can't have total control over this one part of his life, his home, when he has no control over any other part of his life, if he cannot be the man in this one place - he loses his temper a bit and all of the anger rises to the surface and maybe he strikes out at the kids or his wife, you know, to keep them in their place, well, when it comes down to it, do you think that a performance at ABC No Rio where in one breath

the Pope and capitalism and patriarchy and homophobic are denigrated and insulted by a sneering poet who throws shit on the audience to symbolize disgust with the established order of things and in the next breath extols the virtues of atheism and shoplifting and buttfucking and free abortions - do you think the neighbors would feel any affinity for these people? Do you think they would, - if they were there at all - shout out Yea Sister! drive your fist deeper into that sweet hole? Fuck no! So the terms of the battle are quit muddled indeed. These artists are contemplating issues that usually are associated with bourgeois decadence, at the first generational immigrant level of poverty, people are simply too busy getting on with the business of life, struggling to make ends

meet and living up to those expectations of 'The Better Life' that is supposedly to be found here in the 'Land of Golden Streets', while also trying to find happiness in the natural outlets of life, the true wellsprings of desire and communalism. It's easy for bourgeois artists who've already rejected the comforts of the accepted life, to spout off about the simple beautitudes of poverty, but it's another thing when that poverty is imposed by the systemic competitiveness inherent in the rules of a game which, from the start, are rigged against you insuring that you'll never even try or, if you do you'll never win (escape, or transcend) or that you misdirect your energies at a false enemy, preferably one whose interests are very much your own rather than at the ruling elite who are subtly manipulating your very thoughts.

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"WITH MY BARE HANDS... WITH MY LIFE IF I MUST... I'LL TEAR AWAY THIS BARRIER BETWEEN US!"

EXTREMIST GROUP SHOW
 ABC NO RD
 154 RIVINGTON

LEGS, ARMS, AND EYES—WITH IDEAS

The extremist show lasted for 9 days with Kembra sleeping in the window ledge for much of it. It was conceived as a series of manifestoes against the ordinary to be performed by the artists who would enact or realize their ideas to show that the written word was not the end all-be all of transmitted ideas, to point out the ridiculousness & ephemerality of words. One guy came in and just broke dozens of bottles everywhere. The performers would realize their assertions and then everything that was written or painted or used as props was to be burned in the East river, but ended up being burnt in the backyard.

The Extremist symbol. Pfahler writes that the logo illustrates "one of the symbols of the movement: pure deliberate

After the 7 Days show, Jack & Peter were invited to take over the directorship of No Rio. Soon after this, another artist who had begun to frequent No Rio at this time, Kembra Pfahler, put on the 'Extremist Show'. "No one took me seriously in other circles, I felt like this 9th grader who none of the 12th graders would talk to, I was this very young woman artist that no one would listen to, except when I went to No Rio, there were people there who were coming from the same place I was, of wanting to test limits. The stuff we did was about transforming yourself, daring yourself in public to see your own bravery emerge. A lot of stuff I learned about performing and being on stage and challenging other people as much as challenging myself, I learned back then at those early shows, and I still use all of that. And that's where I met El Coco Que Hable- The Talking Coconut, he was this remarkable, charming neighborhood poet who was just incredible, he was like this old but still very strong tropical surfer who could captivate anyone with his words and the strength of his personality. He was coming around alot and doing on the spot readings. Also I remember Richard Hoffman, he's dead now but during the Extremist Show I remember he tar'd and feathered the entire gallery space. I remember that things got heavy sometimes, especially with the neighbors upstairs. My friend Valery was raped by a group of 12 year olds upstairs. You had to watch yourself around the neighborhood and in the building."

Samoa, an artist who performs often with Kembra, remembered a show that Psychodrama put on. "They were these guys from Virginia who nobody would book, everyone was too disgusted or afraid to, so they came to No Rio. One guy was reading a poem while giving himself an enema and the others started throwing buckets of horseshit at everyone in the gallery, they brought the shit in a truck from some farm in Virginia, and when the shit started flying the room cleared out, everyone ran screaming down Rivington Street with these naked guys chasing them and throwing shit, a lot of people got hit with it, the neighbors just thought that anyone who went to No Rio was insane."

Kali interrupts herself, "buy me a drink Dion, won't you?" - "Yes, it's true, during the tenure of the visual artists, the bridging of the cultural gap between the artists and the community was probably a more easily attainable goal which would, in time, had the founding No Rio directors stayed involved, have been resolved somehow in a more tangible fashion although I think that to the degree that ABC had become and was becoming even more so of a place "For people to do things that ought not to be done", as Anne Messner has put it, would have been truncated considerably.

"And oh, such decadence, Dion! I blush just thinking about the goings on over there, somehow I almost sense the disguised machinations of Caligula at work here, but, naaaw, he wouldn't do that, would he? I'm sure these mortals are quite capable of creating their own lusty playground without any help from us, we just need to do a little, shall we say, facilitation, a nudge here, a gentle push there." "It's all part of the plan, Kali, part of the evolution of an idea. We must restore the balance of power, WE MUST DESTROY MOLOCH! But first, we have to help these mortals to recognize the Moloch that is in each of them so that they can either transform or excoriate it."

... of the logo illustrates "one of the underlying feelings of the nine-day movement: pure deliberate

The Extremist symbol. Pfahler writes that the logo illustrates "one of the underlying feelings of the nine-day movement: pure deliberate

Exterminating gaze.
Voyeurs erect.
I am receiving the challenge of loving
in a culture of death.
The struggle for tenderness—
can it be shown?

BRADLEY ERAS



corpses on the sidewalk and throbbings
in the gutter.
Invisibly, oh corpses, sweetly end invisibly
sweep them out.
Lower, lower. Where the ashes fall
all memory is but an odor.

EDITH CLIVER

This is the skin of dreams.
The witch is that part in each of us
that desires to be free.

BRADLEY ERAS



David Life examining a painting he has just made on a sheet of glass during a performance on the third day. Painting in background is by Rut Zamboni. (Photo by Toyo.)

Phyllis but we also played with and babysat their kids, we also fought with them over selling drugs out of their apartment, anyways Phyllis was this Vietnam vet/heroin addict who we all believed was certainly capable of shooting us and we wrestled him down and grabbed the gun only to find it was made of plastic, but at first, while we were wrestling with him the place just cleared out - everyone was ducking for cover. "

While Brad Taylor & I talk in the backyard of No Rio, I feed my dog Hilda P. Doolittle a plate of rice & beans from Cibaos' on the corner, for some reason she pukes it up almost immediately with urgent retching sounds which spark another memory from Brad. "Oh yeah, and one night during a reading out here, the yard was lit up by a bonfire, I think Eve Tietlebaum was reading a poem, and Jack and Peters' pit bull who lived in the backyard, ate someone's order of rice & beans from Cibaos' and then walked over, lay down in front of Eve and barfed up a load of white rice."

Jack remembers Aline Mare from Erotic Psyche pissing into a vase and then reading a ritualized poem over it, with Bradley Eros down on all fours pushing a fish across the stage and Aline following carrying the vase and chanting, there was film projected over every surface of the room. Bradley also made an enormous dome out of fabrics and cushions which was called the Sensory Tent, when one would enter the tent they would be carried anonymously by arms covered in velvet which protruded into the tent from the outside. Another facet of the 7 Days involved several artists attending a 6th grade class at Hanna Silver elementary school to illustrate creation myths with Peter dressed up in a chicken suit. Peter: "I fasted that week, and one night out in the yard Jack & I did this silent performance with me emerging from a large pool of water which really was just this part of the yard that had flooded after a big rain, we filled it with gasoline and lit it up, I came up out of this pool and lay down at the edge, Jack came out of the darkness and revived me, we shared a mango and then dissappeared back into the forest."

Things were changing. Jack Waters and Peter Cramer, Brad Taylor, and Carl George sat in on a No Rio collective meeting one night and proposed a show based on creation myths called 7 Days of Creation. The show would be 7 days of 24 hr. non-stop performance with little or no curatorial effort, anyone who showed up to perform or participate would become part of the show. The 7 days would characterize the future direction of ABC No Rio, both artistically and politically, in the sense that it gained a more focused queer aesthetic and a more experimental approach to shows, which became increasingly performance & video oriented. The new crowd coming to No Rio both to do shows and to see them were more off of the artistic beaten track, especially in terms of the normal background for artists at the time. Most made their bones performing in nightclubs and had skipped art school altogether. For most, the visual, fine arts were too confining a field to limit themselves to. Many were not clear with themselves what it was they wanted to express with their 'creating' because it was an evolving transformation which encompassed the whole of their lives rather than one, creative aspect of it. Take for example Hapi Phace, "The most virile drag queen in the world - rough cut" as Edgar Oliver has described him, who used himself as a sculpture to decorate himself with odd costumery and often performed comedic sets at the Pyramid Club with another performance artist named Philly. They did an act using an enlarged Frieda Khalo painting with holes cut out of it for their faces. These ideas belong to another world than that of the radical fine arts student. This emerging type of performance had as its antecedent the pre-war Berlin cabaret scene.

The Extremist symbol. Pfahler writes that the logo

The 7 Days of Creation was a convergence of varied threads of mutual desire to break down the ordinary perception of forms and to rebuild it, to create a new way of looking at things which could be translated into a new way of living. One of these threads was the Haunted Circus, another was Erotic Psyche. Bradley Eros and Aline Mare formed the core of a revolving troupe of experimental filmmakers and performers. It's difficult to characterize their ideas out of the context of that time and by using the written word to define non linear irruptions of shamanic eroticism, the expressions used most by those who witnessed Erotic Psyche' performances include "ceremonial - ritualized - making offerings - fire - snakes - ambisexual - erotically charged - seismic forces", "They were an arty sex show", summarizes Jack Waters. Edgar Olivar remembers, "I had always known them primarily as filmmakers, although I think they were probably the first to film themselves performing and then splice it with found images and sections of film retrieved from the garbage can by other filmmakers. They used powerful & disturbing images with no dialogue, they were about eroticism and natural & arcane sciences and researching lightning bolts and the study of water and all elements."

The 7 Days were loosely based on reinventing or recreating the Juao Christian creation stories, with a more carnivalesque and liberatory element that would be about the art of creation itself rather than dogma. It was fortuitous that year that April Fools and Good Friday happened to coincide, so April 1st was set for the opening of the show. On the night of the opening, Jack and Peter were walking down the street to round up supplies' needed for the night, beer & paint, and happened to fall into step behind two priests. While Jack and Peter were fuming about the anti pagan, homophobic and rigid dogmatism of Catholicism, four crisp 100 dollar bills fluttered, unseen by the priests, from one of their pockets to the ground. Thus some major funding of the 7 Days of Creation was provided in part by the Catholic church.

Brad Taylor remembers Philly performing later that night. "Philly would do this confessional mad ranting, it was very painful and self revelatory, even embarrassing stuff, you could tell she was really reaching deep and she would go into what can only be called a 'state' or epileptic fit, she'd be wearing a clown outfit with pink feathers and a pink feather boa, and then she would just vomit, she did this often enough that she was pretty damn good at projectile vomiting, she was pulling up all of her spleen and bile at the world and everything in it. Then this other performer, named Chu, came out with this sushi chef outfit on and he had all these young cute Japanese boys who adored him, to expedite his performance, they were his assistants, Chu was a very experienced sushi chef and knew his way around knives very well, the room was silent and an assistant brought out a large fish and you thought 'ah god, he's gonna kill that fish' but instead of a meticulous chef-like demonstration he started to hack that fucker, it turned into a violent, gleeful scene of carnage and ecstasy and the Japanese boys came over and reached in with their hands and ripped out the guts, blood and flesh were everywhere and scales were flying and the audience was splattered by entrails, the Japanese boys picked up all of these guts and stuff and put them in a pail, they went behind the stage and then came back and threw the pails at the audience but what came out were Philly's pink feathers, it was truly an absorbing experience.

"What did I do? I don't remember a lot from that week and I'd be surprised if anyone does,

All I know is I had this poem called The Fool, which was based on the tarot fool, I had a fool outfit and a little bell to ring and I came out to do my reading and I forgot my glasses and couldn't remember a lot of my lines, and that really I couldn't have looked more foolish if I tried. Another night Samoa was singing with Tanya Ransom 'Somebodys in my head' when Phillipe, the crazy heroin addict uncle who lived upstairs wandered in on stage with a gun, he had been drunk & high for days and we fought & fought with them upstairs (the Acostas) over

The Extremist symbol. Pfahler writes that the logo

"I remember that we also got lunch money and car fare on the days we went to No Rio", Edgar fondly remember::

Helen and Edgar eventually formed 'The Haunted Circus', which first performed at No Rio and the Pyramid Club. "In those days you always went nightclubbing at places like the Mudd club and the Pyramid, where performance art was going on. If you were tired, you went to bed early & got up later to go to the after hours party. No Rio was where stuff went on that couldn't get booked anywhere else, the stuff was to weird. It was a place that seemed to vindicate the things we were feeling and performing. My sister Helen and I did the Haunted Circus with Brian Damage, who has since passed away. He was a very gifted artist who decorated the interiors of a lot of nightclubs back then with spray paint and foam core, he also did one of the rooms at the Chelsea Arms. For the Haunted Circus he made an encumbersome spandex cave that was a labyrinth of shifting spandex stalagmites with Helens' paintings forming parts of the walls along with manikins and sculptures, and a mime playing saxophone inside of it. It was inside of this cave that I performed my play, 'Prince Lears' Playground', based on my childhood. I've kept this persona throughout my work since then. I didn't really understand a lot of what I was doing on stage, it was an evolving thing, a growing process."

Says Philly, whose work has been described as neo-shamanic-A-go-go, of the 7 Days: "There was this sense of 'what is there left to celebrate, what is there left to create, everything has already been co-opted and commercialized", so people were reaching for something else. Basically, everyone was drunk, high, deranged & ambisexual, those 7 days were more like one long day of creativity and madness. I couldn't tell where one day ended and the next began. There was this ritual of Jack dragging in the maggoty garbage from the streets and dumping it all over the gallery floor and all this stuff was incorporated into the performances, there was little separation between what people were doing and when they would begin to 'perform' because the idea of performing was secondary to the real life going on all over the place - people met under the piles of garbage and had mad philosophical discussions about art and paganism while Samoa would be on top of a ladder screaming and others sleeping somewhere or lying in a writhing erotic pile- I can't really remember a lot of stuff, I can't give you a linear progression of the 7 Days because there is none. What did I do? Like I said, I can't remember a lot, but I had this alter set up in the back of the gallery by the wood burning stove, the toilet was back there too, primitive, it was really primitive, the partition to the bathroom would keep falling down, the alter was called 'Alter the Alters', it was made from street garbage and junk I brought from San Fransisco piled on top of a table and ringed with candles from the botanical, people would take stuff from it and leave stuff, which was how they altered the alter. Later the whole thing was exploded by fireworks in the backyard. That was the summer I lived in the gallery."

The Extremist symbol. Pfahler writes that the logo illustrates "one of the underlying feelings of the nine-day movement: pure deliberate

A solo danced by Peter Francis to a segment of Henry Miller's "Black Spring," an apocalyptic prose poem ("This is the spring th..."). In the climax of the piece, Francis, suspended by a rope, descended into the stage trapdoor and emerged covered in black paint. (Photo by Hector Gonzalez)



The Department of Cultural Affairs would have you know that it is not a department to be trifled with, and walking through its byzantine, elephantine - trunklike corridors, one is no doubt assured of this. A young man and woman, dwarfed by the pitched, darkened walls, approach a window, somewhat timidly, uncertainly. There is a sliding glass panel placed about a foot above where even the tallest persons head would be. A weak beam of light bleeds from it, dribbling down the wall to collect in an ineffectual puddle at the feet of the man and woman who stand before it penitantly. The woman clears her throat and says, hopefully, "Excuse me?" After a stillborn pause the glass window barks back in its slot like a bullet being chambered. "[YES?]" "Um, we, that is, my brother, Edgar, and I, we don't want to pick up trash anymore for our checks, see, we're artists, and we want to do something, you know, creative, something FUN! OF course, we appreciate our welfare checks - don't we Edgar?" "Why yes, we do Helen, very much so indeed. I know I certainly do enjoy mine". "There, you see, we just want to do something where we would feel more, hummm, more what, Edgar?" "Useful, Helen. We want to feel useful." The twins look up expectantly at the window. There is no face to be seen, just the dim red light and every few seconds what appears to be lightning behind it. "[THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS HAS CONSIDERED YOUR REQUEST. YOU ARE HEREBY ORDERED TO REPORT TO 156 RIVINGTON STREET, NEW YORK CITY, TO FULFILL THE CONTINUING MORAL DEBT ACCRUED TO YOU BY YOUR PETITIONING THE STATE FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE. THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS HAS SPOKEN. TAKE THY SELVES HENCE.]"

The twins, holding hands, run down the dark corridors, giggling. Giant doors slam shut behind them. Back behind the glass window, a deep booming, nefarious laughter echoes throughout the tunnels along with a deafening knee slap which shakes the building, waking up the rats.

the underlying feelings of the nine-day movement: pure deliberate

a logo